



These consultations confirmed that a significant number of refugees durably settled in Mauritania have not been registered yet.

## Key Findings

- + Presence of **thousands of unregistered Malian refugees** throughout the country in villages and rural areas.
  - + **Long term settlement** of Malian refugees in Mauritania, pending possibility to go back to Mali once security and socio-economic conditions will have improved.
  - + **Heightened protection risks** for undocumented refugees (arrests, restriction of movement, etc.) including those pre-registered but not fully yet registered by UNHCR.
  - + **Different levels of integration and inclusion** into national services (e.g., small number enrolled with civil registration service): in some areas, difficult living conditions and limited access to/availability of basic services.
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- + Presence of **several thousands of unregistered Malian refugees** throughout the country living in secondary towns, villages and rural areas (gross estimate).

UNHCR has been informed by local authorities, and refugee communities of the presence of:

- Between 5,000 to 10,000 individuals in the Hodh Chargui, dispersed in villages across a vast area bordering with Mali.
- A few thousand persons in and around secondary towns and villages along the main route from Ayoun to, and in rural areas in Trarza, Brakna and Assaba.
- A few hundred working in mines in Chami and Zouerat areas.

Some of these refugee groups have been living in Mauritania for years and had not been identified nor registered to date. However, with the evolution of the conflict and expansion to central areas Mali, recent arrivals (since 2018-19) have also taken place.


- + **Long-term nature of their settlement** in Mauritania.
  - Most registered Malian refugees surveyed expressed their **primary intent to return to Mali** once the security and socio-economic conditions will have improved.
  - A very **small portion** of Malian refugees shared their **intent to move onwards** to go to Europe, often through quick/direct crossing, or following a short stay in Mauritania to gather money. All these individuals were young men.
  - Pending the realization of conditions for a potential return to their country of origin, **most Malian refugees have settled durably** in Mauritania. Some of them have moved from one area of the country to another, in most cases to find jobs. Living conditions vary greatly between recent arrivals, and those who settled in Mauritania years ago, and depending on the community support they can benefit from.

- ⊕ Heightened **protection risks for undocumented** refugees and **differentiated levels of integration and inclusion** into national services.
- Unpredictable access to territory (due to Covid-19 measures, security concerns, crackdowns on irregular movements mostly in response to demands from European countries, etc.).
- Lack of access to registration, documentation and subsequent risk of arrest and expulsion:
  - Lack of knowledge of the refugee status determination procedures and refugee rights and duties, both on the part of some authorities and the refugees themselves.
  - Lack of means to reach UNHCR registration centers.
  - Many undocumented births (often occurring outside of health structures).
  - Limited freedom of movement for the undocumented refugees.
  - Important backlog (7,000 individuals) of Malians who have approached UNHCR for registration and documentation and are waiting for approximately 400 days before being called for an interview as UNHCR does not have sufficient resources to expedite the processing of the applications. Meanwhile, they are not documented and cannot benefit from UNHCR and partner support on health, education, and assistance.
- Access to services limited for refugees holding neither national nor UNHCR documentation.
- Many families visited in the Hodh Chargui were living in dire conditions (no shelter, malnutrition, children out of school).

## Key recommended actions

- ✓ **Improve access to the territory and to the registration and refugee status determination** and **procedures** by increasing the resources available to UNHCR Mauritania.
- ✓ Engage with authorities, development actors and donors to **facilitate the inclusion** and **access to basic services** at various locations of settlement (urban and rural areas, and the camp).
- ✓ **Improve access to the territory and to the registration and refugee status determination** and **procedures** by increasing the resources available to UNHCR Mauritania.
- Expand contingency planning for large numbers of refugee arrivals for the entire Hodh Chargui as well as the Hodh Gharbi.
- Develop a plan for UNHCR registration of Malian refugees in prioritized areas where their identification and documentation are more needed: in the Hodh Chargui (moughataas of Amourj, Djiguenni, Timbedra and Nema), and in other rural areas (such as Kiffa and Aleg).
- Use of differentiated registration procedures to adjust to the caseload profiles for purposes of efficiency.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the Hodh Chargui where most Malians are in need of international protection, UNHCR will use the “enhanced registration process”. In the rest of the country, where profiles are more diverse, with Malians originating from northern and central Mali living closely together with migrant Malians who have no risk in case of return to Mali. To identify refugees in those mixed groups, UNHCR will use its merged registration-RSD procedure currently employed in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

- Support the enrolment of hard-to-reach Malian refugees by the national civil registration agency, ANRPTS, and their subsequent documentation.
  - Ensure appropriate information and communication on refugee status determination procedures targeting both relevant authorities and people in need of international protection.
-  Engage with authorities, development actors and donors to **facilitate the inclusion** and **access to basic services** at various locations of settlement (urban and rural areas, and the camp).
- Engage development partners (World Bank, the EU and GIZ for instance) and other UN agencies (such as WFP and UNICEF) to support authorities to facilitate refugee inclusion and ensure refugee access to livelihoods opportunities and basic services such as civil registration, education, and health, in areas where they are currently settled.
  - Offer the option of relocation to Mbera camp for the most vulnerable refugees in the Hodh Chargui.
  - Reinforce community mechanisms.

#### FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL STAFFING FOR OUTREACH, REGISTRATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Registration of Malian refugees in the Hodh Chargui: USD 547,000

Registration of Malian refugees outside the Hodh Chargui, including acceleration of the treatment of the backlog of Malian refugees in urban areas: USD 300,000